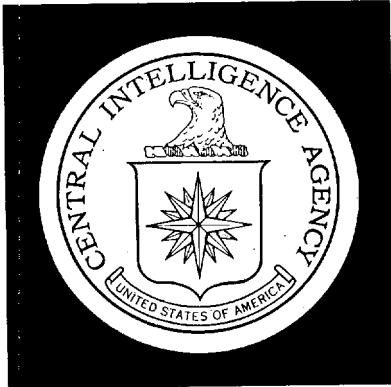


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SOUTH VIETNAM: Big Minh has told US officials that there is a "90-percent chance" he will not run for president because Thieu is rigging the election.

Reiterating themes that he and his supporters have stressed in recent weeks, Minh claimed that Thieu is using every means at hand to ensure his victory. He cited the seizure of opposition newspapers and alleged threats by government agents against both his and Vice President Ky's campaign workers. Asserting that a "hands-off" policy by the US will not be sufficient, Minh asked that US officials intervene at the provincial and district levels to prevent Thieu from gaining unfair advantage.

Minh considers it doubtful that Vice President Ky can obtain the necessary endorsements to make the race because the government is pressing provincial councilors to block such endorsements. Moreover, for the first time, Minh said he is thinking of throwing his support to Ky if Minh decides not to run. If Minh so decides before the filing deadline on 4 August, Ky would probably be assured of qualifying and this would alleviate some of the criticism that would be directed at Thieu in the event of a Minh withdrawal.

Minh appears to have genuine doubts about the wisdom of running, probably because he is concerned that he may not make a good showing, but he is continuing to prepare for the campaign. Last week he reportedly sounded out a respected Catholic opposition deputy on becoming his vice-presidential running mate.

Minh's remarks to US officials were probably made partly in the hope of improving his chances by pressing the US to dissuade Thieu from abusing some of the advantages he enjoys as incumbent president.

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USSR-ROMANIA: The Soviets have upbraided the Romanians for actions taken during Ceausescu's recent Far Eastern trip.

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[redacted] top Soviet leaders criticized the "anti-Soviet" tone of Ceausescu's Peking visit during the latter's stopover in Moscow on 24 June. The final Chinese-Romanian communiqué, which the Soviets feel accepted the Chinese thesis that the socialist bloc is divided into large and small states having conflicting interests, aroused particular Soviet displeasure. It was also a matter of major controversy during Ceausescu's later stay in Mongolia.

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[redacted] Ceausescu, while in Mongolia, questioned the rationale for participation in the Warsaw Pact because "there is no threat from imperialism." Ceausescu's remark probably refers to his general disapproval of all military blocs and his long resistance to troop participation in Pact exercises.

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[redacted] Ceausescu's June visit to Mongolia, which always echoes Moscow, was marked by ideological disputes that prevented agreement on more than an innocuous communiqué and bland speeches.

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JORDAN-FEDAYEEN: With their military capability all but extinguished, individual fedayeen may lash out in acts of terror and sabotage.

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As military action subsided in the north, two incidents in Amman have raised the possibility of increased terrorist incidents in the capital. On 16 July a military banquet was disrupted by two grenades thrown over a garden wall, and on 19 July one policeman was wounded in a bombing incident in downtown Amman. Even without a direct attack on the King, a wave of fedayeen terrorism in Amman would draw harsh counteraction and bring further opprobrium from other Arab states on the King and his government.

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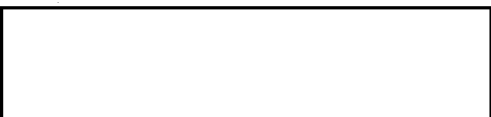
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